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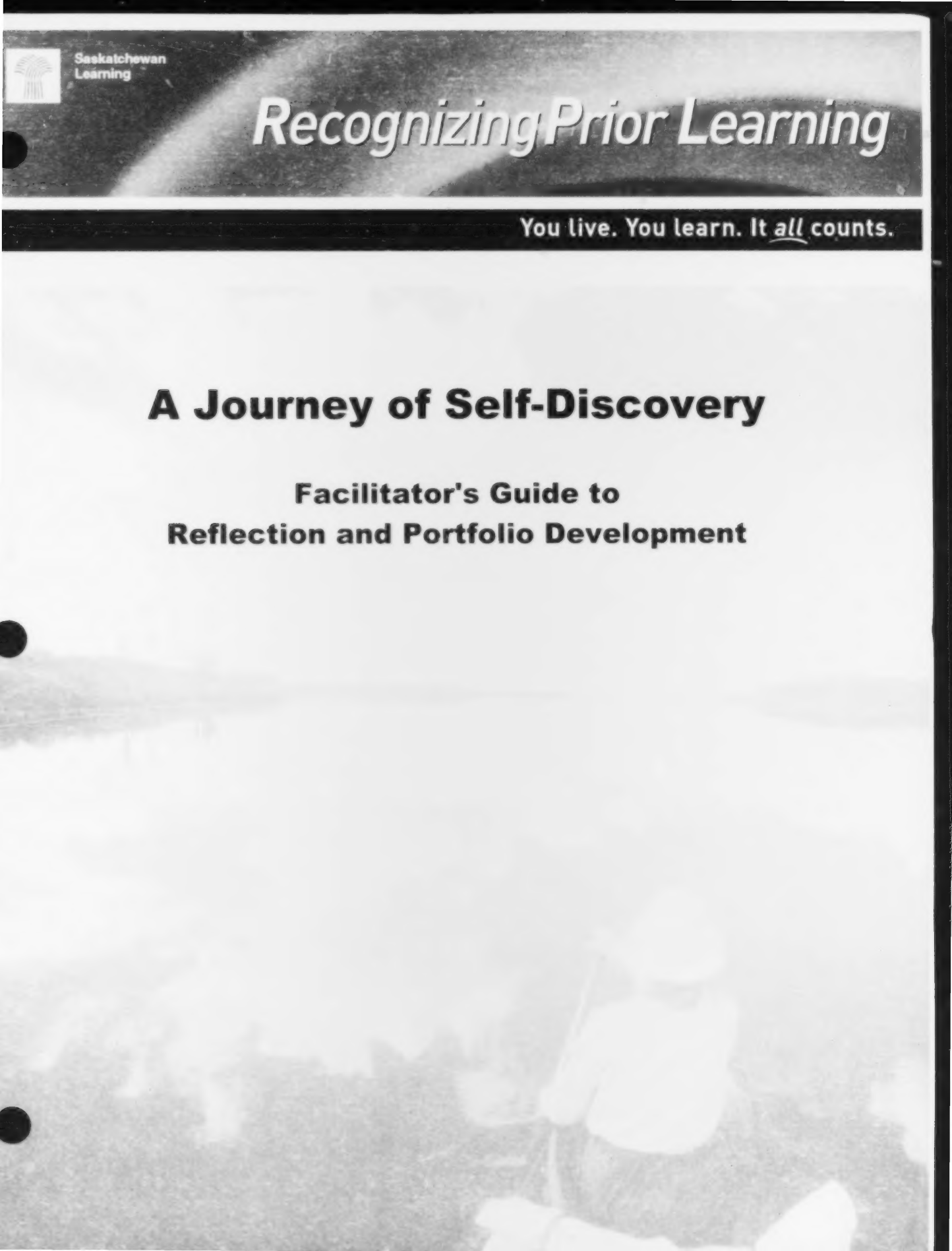
A Journey of Self-Discovery

Facilitator's Guide to Reflection and Portfolio Development



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Acknowledgements

Saskatchewan Learning extends special thanks and appreciation to everyone who contributed to the development of this *A Journey of Self-Discovery: Facilitator's guide to reflection and portfolio development*, including:

- The participants of the various pilot workshops and Focus Group sessions held at various locations across Saskatchewan in 2003 and 2004.
- We also thank those who contributed their time and effort to reviewing the drafts of the guide and providing valuable feedback.

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Saskatchewan Learning (2005)
A Journey of Self-Discovery: Facilitator's guide to reflection and portfolio development Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

Cover photo: Canoeing (North Churchill River)
Courtesy Tourism Saskatchewan/David Buckley

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1 INTRODUCTION

People learn every day, through work experience, household responsibilities, community involvement, traveling, and in the classroom. How many people know that their learning could open doors to new opportunities? How many people take the time to think about what they have learned and how it might be recognized? People are always learning, so let's begin to recognize it!

If K=knowledge, S=skills, A=attitudes, L=lifetime and Σ=sum then we can see that "learning is the sum of the knowledge, skills and attitudes developed over a lifetime."

$$\text{Learning} = \Sigma \frac{KSA}{L}$$

The first step for recognizing all of someone's learning is to think about the many experiences people have had in their lives: at home, at work, at school and in the community. The next step is to identify what has been learned through those experiences. The following step is to begin to collect or create samples that show what you have learned.

The process of thinking about learning - the process of reflection - can be a powerful process for building self-awareness and self-confidence. Reflection increases self-knowledge, better preparing people to make deliberate, well-informed choices for their futures. Furthermore, if what has been learned matches the requirements for a job or an educational program, and if it is adequately documented, it may be possible to have this learning formally recognized.

This guide is intended to be used by facilitators to support learners' personal and/or professional development through a process of reflection. The activities for reflection were developed for use in a group setting and can be adapted as required. They can be embedded into any learning environment to enhance the process of self-discovery through reflection.

As learners and facilitators continue on this journey they may find themselves on a route that takes many twists and turns; they may travel along unexpected pathways. There will be many surprises as learners discover the breadth of the knowledge, skills and attitudes they have developed through their life experiences.

Remember to celebrate the surprises and enjoy the journey.

1.1 A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO PORTFOLIOS

A portfolio is a concept, process and a product:

CONCEPT – The concept of portfolio development reflects a specific way of thinking about learning. Portfolios emphasize the value of ***all learning***, regardless of where or how the learning takes place.

PROCESS – The process of portfolio development involves a systematic (step-by-step) way to identify, think about, document, organize and demonstrate the learning resulting from life experiences.

PRODUCT –The portfolio is a purposeful selection of work, presented in a way that demonstrates the story of our learning, gifts, talents, and goals.

Portfolios are like 'learning documentaries' that present concrete examples of an individual's knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs). Portfolios are purposeful, organized collections of materials that summarize, highlight, and validate who people are, their learning, their interests, and their goals. Portfolios are evolving, dynamic *"works-in-progress"* that grow and change with the learner. How a portfolio looks will also change depending on the purpose for the portfolio.

Portfolios can be used for many purposes. Portfolios are used by artists, students, and teachers to highlight their achievements, demonstrate progress, and explore career options. Professional associations in the health field - such as nurses, pharmacists, and doctors - are using portfolios to record professional development and ongoing learning. Portfolios are guiding unemployed and underemployed people through a process of identifying their knowledge, skills and attitudes to create options for the future. The portfolio process supports (w)holistic self-esteem building that can lead to fulfilling careers.

The three basic steps of portfolio development include:

1. Collection of evidence that demonstrates what a learner knows and can do;
2. Reflection on the meaning and relevance of the evidence; and
3. Selection of evidence that best represents the desired learning in relation to the intended goal (accreditation, employment, self-awareness, etc.).

When creating a portfolio, additional considerations include:

1. Organizing the evidence in a meaningful way into a centralized location (binder, CD-Rom, web page, etc.);
2. Varying the contents of the portfolio, whether general or specific, depending on the intended purpose for the portfolio; and
3. Reviewing and renewing the evidence in the portfolio on a regular basis. When adding new pieces, decide whether other pieces could be revised, adapted, or removed.

1.2 HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

A Journey of Self-Discovery: Facilitator's guide to reflection and portfolio development is a "Level I Guide" which outlines some generic activities for reflection. Review the contents of the sections and select/adapt those pieces that are appropriate for your learning program.

Chapter 1: The **Introduction** outlines the purpose and use of the guide and provides information on how to work with activities for reflection. It explains how these activities represent the beginning of an ongoing journey toward self-awareness through portfolio development. The introduction also includes a self-assessment tool for facilitators. Facilitators are encouraged to:

1. Read the information in this section;
2. Complete the self-assessment; and
3. Obtain additional information, resources, or training as required.

Chapter 2: **Activities for Reflection** provides an overview of the role that reflection plays in the portfolio development process, in conjunction with collection and selection. This chapter provides examples of reflection activities that can be incorporated into learning programs in the classroom, workplace, etc. Learning programs benefit from incorporating reflection because it enables deeper learning. This happens by encouraging learners to consider not only what they know and can do, but also why it is meaningful to them. Facilitators are encouraged to:

1. Read the information in this section;
2. Examine the agenda for their learning program (activity, course, or program) and identify the learning outcomes (what learners will know and be able to do upon completion of the activity, course, or program);
3. Consider options for incorporating or integrating the activities for reflection into regular learning programs;
4. Engage learners in the planning process to ensure that the learning is relevant to and respectful of their life experience; and
5. Remind learners to collect and save the materials that are developed. These items help form the basis of a portfolio development process.

- Chapter 3: **Ideas and Resources** contains a brief list of resources for facilitators and instructors.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF REFLECTION

This *Level I Guide* includes activities that introduce a process of reflection as an integral step in the development of portfolios. Reflection is a rewarding process because it supports deep learning and provides learners with a skill that they can apply as they go through their day to day activities in other areas of their lives. The process of reflection may be integrated or embedded within any learning environment.

Reflection enhances learners' abilities to see connections between various learning contexts (e.g., community, work, and school) and the transferability of their knowledge, skills and attitudes. Reflection involves four main steps:

1. having an experience,
2. thinking about the experience,
3. learning from the experience, and
4. applying what has been learned.

By taking the time required for reflection and deep learning, we provide learners with the opportunity to integrate learning from various life experiences and create new meaning in their lives. Conscious, purposeful reflection enriches the portfolio development process and the resulting product.

The activities in this guide provide learners with the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and collect or create concrete samples (evidence) of their learning. Through reflection, learners increase their own awareness of their knowledge and skills and become 'walking and talking' portfolios because they are better able to state or demonstrate their learning. Thus, they benefit from the process of reflection and portfolio development, even if an organization, institution, agency or employer does accept a portfolio for assessment.

Note to Facilitators

Facilitators are encouraged to complement the activities in the *Level I Guide* with existing resources in the field of reflection, portfolio development, problem-based learning, career development, and other relevant sources. Select resources are identified in Section 3: Ideas and Resources.

Additional research and work will be required for development of a specialized portfolio to be submitted to education and training providers, employers, or trade/ professional regulatory bodies/ associations, etc. Before learners begin developing a specialized portfolio they should ***contact the relevant organizations, institutions, agencies, or employers*** where they would like to submit their portfolio and request information on requirements, standards, processes, fees, and timelines.

1.4 PRINCIPLES AND CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING

> "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience"
> (*Experiential Learning,* David Kolb, 1984).

There is a wealth of information available on instructional strategies that support an effective learning environment. Jennifer Moon (1999) has identified various conditions that encourage reflection, which include:

- an emotionally supportive environment;
- unstructured or real-life situations, for which there is no obvious solution;
- situations that challenge learners to integrate new learning into previous learning; and
- strong facilitation skills.

Effective learner-centered instruction/facilitation is an art as well as a science, and focuses on learning and the learner. Ideally the learner is an active participant in the teaching and learning process and works together with the facilitator to decide on content and process.

Principles and conditions that support effective facilitation include:

- **Respect** and **acceptance** of everyone;
- **Active involvement** of learners;
- **Recognition** of the learners and their previous life experiences as a primary resource for learning;
- **Collaboration** and **cooperation** involving the facilitator and participants (might also involve the broader community);
- **Engaging** learners in **self-reflection** and **self-discovery**; and
- **Flexibility** to adapt activities to address the individual nature of learning and diverse learning styles.

Effective portfolio development requires the facilitator to inspire learners to discover their own personal meaning and relevance of their learning. In this way the learner gains increased ownership of the process. Within this context, it is anticipated that:

- **Diversity** and **difference** are welcome and desirable;
- **Deep** and **open** reflection will occur, rather than concealment of self;
- A range of **emotions** will be expressed; and
- **Learners** will trust themselves as valid sources of knowledge in the learning process.

1.5 TIPS FOR CREATING AN INCLUSIVE, RESPECTFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Creating a learning environment that values diversity takes many factors into consideration, including: nationality, race, religion, gender, physical abilities, weight, age, world-view, family history, educational background, etc. An inclusive, respectful environment will maximize learner engagement within the learning program.

Facilitators are encouraged to incorporate multiple theories, methods and resources to create an inclusive, respectful learning environment. Suggestions include:

1. Develop awareness of biases and assumptions about culture, age, gender, educational background, etc.
2. Be aware of and understand individual differences in addition to cultural differences.
3. Use inclusive language and avoid stereotyping.
4. Involve learners and/or content experts in the learning process, especially in planning.
5. Be flexible in planning and delivery of learning programs.
6. Use a variety of media in learning activities to address multiple learning styles and personality types.
7. Value contributions from individuals, as well as groups and communities.
8. Clearly explain the purpose and anticipated outcome for activities to help establish a common understanding among learners.
9. Be prepared with support or referrals in case learners experience difficult emotions that arise from the reflection process.

1.6 ARE YOU READY TO FACILITATE ACTIVITIES FOR REFLECTION?

A self-assessment checklist has been created for facilitators to gauge their readiness to facilitate activities for reflection. Upon completing the self-assessment, facilitators should be able to identify areas of strength and areas for further development. With experience and self-confidence, facilitators are prepared to create an environment that enables deeper learning to occur.

Facilitator Self-Assessment

For the self-assessment below, rate each item from 1 to 5.

1 = strongly disagree (no knowledge or experience)
2 = disagree (novice)
3 = neither agree or disagree (beginner)
4 = agree (proficient)
5 = strongly agree (advanced)

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I have experience facilitating small and large groups, with diverse backgrounds					
2. I focus on learners creating their own meaning from the learning, rather than on providing information					
3. I integrate the previous experience of learners as a valued component of the learning activities					
4. I involve learners in planning their own learning and negotiate the learning activities to ensure activities are relevant and meaningful					
5. I have effectively reflected on my own experience to identify learning (knowledge, skills and attitudes)					
6. I have strong communication and interview skills (e.g., asking appropriate probing questions) to support learner reflection					
7. I can support students through a process of reflecting on experience to identify of knowledge, skills and attitudes					
8. I can clearly state and demonstrate my own learning arising from work, school, and life experience					
9. I can help learners clearly state and demonstrate the learning from work, school, and life experiences					
10. I am comfortable with emotions being expressed as part of the process of reflection					
11. I create learning environments which encourage reflection (e.g., use real-life situations, which offer no immediate solutions, for exploration)					
12. I incorporate activities that require the integration, ordering and evaluation of ideas and concepts					
13. I am ready to facilitate activities for reflection					

Creating a Facilitator Learning Plan or Profile

After completing the self-assessment, facilitators should examine their results to create a personal profile and professional development plan.

1. Identify the areas where you feel you have developed the knowledge and skills to effectively facilitate reflective activities (marked with a 4 or 5). Consider how you have developed and demonstrated these skills.
    - Identify your strengths as a facilitator (marked 4 or 5);
    - Outline the work/life experience where you applied these skills; and
    - Identify the evidence you could use to demonstrate your knowledge, skills and attitudes in this area.

Strengths as a Facilitator

a. _____

Possible evidence:

-
-

b. _____

Possible evidence:

-
-

2. Identify any areas you would like to improve. If you have any check marks in 1, 2, or 3, it is recommended that you gain additional training, information or support in this area prior to facilitating activities for others. Consider how you may further develop in these areas, for example:
    - Undertake research and complete reflective activities on your own;
    - Obtain training, mentorship or guidance in facilitation; or
    - Attend learner-centered workshops where the values and principles of reflection are modeled.

Areas for Further Development

a. _____

Steps for improving knowledge, skills and abilities:

-
-

b. _____

Steps for improving knowledge, skills and abilities:

-
-

Remember that although strong facilitation skills are required to facilitate reflection and portfolio development, a facilitator does not need to be *an expert* prior to undertaking activities for reflection. This is a learning process and facilitators can learn alongside the participants.

Considerations for Facilitators

1. Start small. Trying to do too much when introducing a new process can be overwhelming. Strive to accomplish small steps over time and build on your successes.

2. Expect to use extra time at first when planning to incorporate activities for reflection. Extra time spent in up-front planning will help reduce challenges during delivery of activities or in follow-up.

3. Work with a colleague whenever possible. You and your colleague can provide each other with a sounding board for ideas and mutual support.

4. Make a collection of activities and ideas. Evaluate the ones that work and those that do not. Revisit old activities occasionally; fresh eyes may see new opportunities for old ideas.

5. Be persistent. If you feel that the process is not working, reflect on the experience to gain new insights. Identify the issues, create solutions, and make necessary adaptations. As a facilitator, consider:

    - What worked?
    - What could have been better?
    - How did the students respond to the activity?
    - What feedback did students give about the activity?
    - Was I open to honest feedback (or was I nervous about receiving constructive comments)?
    - What adaptations could be made to the activity?
    - How did I respond to the activity?
    - How could I adjust my approach to enhance the process?

6. Remember that expertise develops over time and often through a process of trial and error. See this learning process as a journey, rather than the destination.

1.7 YOUR DAILY ACTIVITIES - A GOLDMINE OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ATTITUDES

Everyday activities provide many opportunities for learning. People often take this learning for granted, because many daily activities are either easy for them or just part of their 'routine.' By reflecting on their daily activities, learners can gain a deeper understanding of the tasks involved, which will reveal knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs) that might otherwise be overlooked.

Identifying the KSAs from daily activities is like digging for gold. First learners identify the spot where they wish to dig (e.g., key daily activities). As they dig, they begin to uncover some general tasks involved in the activity. They may need to expand or adjust where they dig as the process unfolds. Learners need to keep track of where they are digging, to ensure that they uncover the full range of tasks involved in the activity. Finally, they sift through everything to find the KSA nuggets that best represent their learning. This sifting also involves organizing the KSAs and presenting them in a meaningful way.

For example, food and beverage servers may not consider all of the various activities that they do in a day as comprising a rich set of tasks. However, if they look at the various activities involved in serving customers, they can begin to see the broad scope of abilities. Through the first level of digging, servers may identify their jobs including various activities, such as:

- greet customers;
- present menus;
- make recommendations and answer questions about food and beverages;
- take orders and any special requests to the kitchen staff;
- serve the food and beverages to the customers;
- provide an accurate bill to customers and accept payment.

Digging deeper on any of these activities will help reveal that each one involves various tasks. For example, in making recommendations and answering questions additional tasks could emerge including:

- provide detailed descriptions of meal preparation processes and ingredients;
- identify safe selections for individuals with food allergies; and
- communicate to resolve conflict with customers who are dissatisfied with their meals and identify solutions.

Learners may also perform these tasks to different levels of mastery and responsibility. For example, a food server may hold the authority to offer compensation to dissatisfied customers only with management approval or independently. This extra detail can provide useful information for the learner and potential employers, to outline opportunities for further development.

The following page outlines the process of identifying the KSAs relating to tasks … this is where the learner begins to dig even deeper.

1.8 KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ATTITUDES (KSAS)

Once learners have identified the tasks relating to their daily activities, which can also apply to a life experience, job or volunteer activity, they can begin to identify their knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs). This process involves digging deeper and breaking down the tasks into their constituent elements. The following page shows an example of how a workshop participant dug deeper for KSAs.

Knowledge = what a person knows. Prompting questions to help identify knowledge include:

- What did I need to know to complete the task?
- What information did I use to make decisions or set priorities?
- What information did I have when I started the task or activity and what new information did I gain?

Skills = what a person can do. Prompting questions to help identify skills include:

- What did I do to complete the task?
- What tools, programs or methods did I use?
- How did I use these tools, programs or methods?
- What steps did I take to decide what to do?

Attitudes = the values and principles are reflected in a person's behaviour. Prompting questions to help identify attitudes include:

- What is important to me while completing the task?
- What principles, morals, or beliefs guide my decisions and actions?
- What are my values regarding life, work, school, etc?
- What qualities or character traits did I show in my work (e.g., enthusiastic, reliable, responsible, courageous, respectful, etc.)?

The KSAs for a server, relating to greeting customers could include:

K = Outline the general steps involved in greeting and seating customers
S = Communicate with customers to establish rapport and create a warm and inviting environment
A = Interact in a courteous manner with all customers on a daily basis

Additional skills identification tools are available, including essential skills (available online at http://www15.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/english/general/es.asp) and the Blueprint for Life/Work Design (available online at http://www.blueprint4life.ca), among others.[1]

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[1] Useful checklists are available online. For example, checklists for identifying knowledge, skills, interests, and values are in an electronic resource *Career Planning: Choosing an Occupation* (Available online at: http://www.alis.gov.ab.ca/pdf/cshop/CareerPlanner.pdf).

Digging Deeper for KSAs

A participant in a pilot portfolio development workshop held in March 2003 explored the KSAs that were developed through volunteer work as a Big Sister. The first step was to identify the activities, but as we *dug deeper,* the group identified more specific learning and achievements gained through that experience. This detail could provide richness to the description of abilities which could then be included on a résumé.

Activity identified: *Coordinated matches for big brothers and sisters.* To identify the KSAs involved in coordinating matches, the facilitator asks probing questions to extract more descriptive KSAs relating to this general activity, including:

Knowledge (K) required for this job included: Knowing what constitutes effective matches, what the protocols are for matching. The coordinator also needs to be familiar with the candidate and volunteers profiles. Knowledge of mediation also required.

Skills (S) required for this job included: Being able to listen, interview candidates, organize group events, manage time, set priorities, communicate effectively and delegate to other volunteers.

Attitudes (A) required for this job included: Being respectful, empathetic, and outgoing, as well as a mediator and team player.

By reflecting on the activity of coordinating matches and what is required to accomplish this, the learner can now compose more descriptive KSAs to include on his/her résumé.

- Created profiles of youth through individual interviews to effectively match candidates with volunteer Big Brothers and Big Sisters according to the organizations' protocols
- Organized group activities to support candidates awaiting matches with volunteer Big Brother or Big Sister

This added detail can benefit the job seeker, as the employer will have a better idea of the complete skill set. For example, many potential employers may not know what *coordinating matches for Big Brother or Big Sister* entails. A more informative entry on the résumé can provide a better idea of the overall ability and level of ability of the learner.

1.9 INITIATING THE JOURNEY OF REFLECTION

As readers proceed through this guide, they are encouraged to keep in mind that this is one step in a journey of reflection and discovery. This journey through activities for reflection might be the first step on the path toward portfolio development. As facilitators and learners gain a deeper understanding of the value of reflection, they may begin compiling evidence of their learning from additional areas of their lives. This will assist them in managing life transitions relating to their educational, employment, and/or personal goals.

Note to Facilitators

For some facilitators, the shift from a traditional teaching model to a portfolio-based learning model presents some challenges and may seem overwhelming at first. To make this shift easier, it is helpful to begin by using basic activities for reflection, which can be readily integrated into an existing learning program, course, or program. Once facilitators are comfortable using the reflection process, they will be ready to consider exploring and incorporating additional elements of the portfolio development process.

2 ACTIVITIES FOR REFLECTION

The *Level I Guide* includes sample activities that can be adapted for use in various contexts (e.g., classrooms, workplaces, community-based organizations, etc.). The activities for reflection encourage learners to become engaged in self-identifying their talents, learning, goals, and achievements.

Learner-centered approaches are integral to meaningful reflection, because only the learners are aware of which of their experiences and evidence are significant and relevant to them. The learner maintains responsibility for identifying the experiences for reflection and for creating/collecting evidence, with the support of the facilitator. Ongoing communication between the facilitator and learners is essential to a meaningful process that achieves its intended goals.

The Activities

Some activities included in the *Level I Guide* are general and can be used for building self-awareness and self-esteem, while others are more specific and relate to specific events or projects. Facilitators should consider the program learning goals, participant literacy levels, cultural backgrounds and learning styles when selecting the activities. The facilitator is encouraged to adapt the selected activities as necessary to meet the needs of the group or individual.

The items produced through the activities can be developed according to the goals of the session or of the individual learners. For example:

- Learners pursuing employment can create workplace related evidence;
- Learners wishing to create a legacy for their ancestors, could compile memoir's, photographs and memorabilia; and
- Learners considering admission to further education/training could create evidence that explores interests, literacy levels, and learning styles.
- Learners planning further education/training could create evidence related to subject matter content.

As learners proceed through the reflective activities, facilitators might want to encourage learners to collect and select the evidence created. This evidence could include examples from their work, school, community, family and/or volunteer activities. Learners could use this evidence as they build their portfolios.

Steps in Planning

1. Identify the purpose(s) of the learning program.
2. Define the role of the facilitator and learners.
3. Outline the learning plan and identify core learning activities.
4. Select activities for reflection that complement this core plan and that suit the needs of the group. Develop an initial plan for the integration of activities (be prepared to adapt as required).
5. Discuss the purpose of the selected activities with the group and discuss the process with learners.
6. Work with learners to identify tangible products they will create or obtain.
7. Have learners collect the products of these activities and store them in a container (binder, folder, box, CD-ROM, etc.). Properly documented, these products would be considered *evidence of learning*.
8. Engage learners in an ongoing process of collection, selection and reflection of evidence as the primary step toward portfolio development.
9. Provide learners with opportunities to practice presenting their learning, in pairs, small groups or large groups.
10. Create opportunities to celebrate achievements at various points through the learning program.
11. Compile a list of resources and services for learners who may require further support or professional counselling.

2.1 SAFeWAY: A GUIDE FOR PRESENTING LEARNER REFLECTIONS

Facilitator Notes

SAFeWay is a guide that helps learners present information or describe significant events clearly and concisely. This format can be used to respond to questions, such as those posed in a job interview.

As the name suggests, this activity is a "safe way" for people to express their thoughts and ideas. The activity helps ensure that people provide sufficient information to tell a story in a structured way. If learners cover the four components of the SAFeWay, they can feel confident that they have answered a question and outlined the key elements of an event or issue.

S = Statement Provide a description of an event, or issue.
- What happened?
- Where and when did it happen?
- Who was there and what did they do?
- Why is this important?

A = Amplify Relate this to the KSAs that you would like to demonstrate:
- What makes this event important?
- Why is this a good example of your learning?
- What tasks/jobs enabled you to develop the KSAs?

F = Few examples Provide some short examples that
- Discuss how KSAs were developed?
- What capabilities have you further developed?

W = Wrap up Tell how the information you have provided supports the statement that you opened with. This closes the summary very neatly and ties the end to the beginning.
- Link the closing remark to the initial statement

Facilitators should provide learners time to prepare their responses prior to sharing their SAFeWay presentation with others. This activity can be adapted for various purposes including: introductions, responses to interview questions, etc.

This format is very useful for preparing learners to respond to behavioural interview questions, for example "Tell me about a time when you experienced a conflict with a co-worker. What did you do? What was the result? How has this experience changed your behaviour for the future?" If learners are preparing for employment interviews, facilitators are encouraged to use the SAFeWay along with practice interview questionnaires.

Facilitators might remind learners to use the SAFeWay each time they present information to others. Through practice, learners will develop greater comfort speaking about events, issues, and themselves.

Introductions Activity - Your 60-Second Sound Byte: **FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS**

Starting a workshop with introductions helps to create a sense of community among the participants. Using SAFeWay as a guide for introductions encourages learners to develop an outline of information they may choose share.

1. Provide learners with questions to prompt reflection, such as the ones provided on the Activity Sheet.
2. Set a general time limit for each speaker's introduction, as appropriate for the group. Giving each person a specified period of time can help create balance (everyone is invited to equal 'air time'), but may not suit all cultural groups. Facilitators might wish to include some flexibility in their planning.
3. To advance this activity, repeat the exercise, but reduce the time allowed. Shorter time limits encourage learners to be more discerning and selective about what they choose to say about themselves.

Here is an example of a SAFeWay introduction (fictional). The learners could be invited to provide 'titles' for their introductions. The title for this one could be: "From Carpenter to Entrepreneur: Mission is-it-possible?"

S: My name is J____ and I am a carpenter, single parent, and jogger. I have been working at a company for 10 years and recently have decided that I might like to start my own company.

A: Making a change feels a little scary right now, as I have commitments to looking after my family, but working for a company does not allow me to use my creativity. I am used to setting goals for myself and going after them. I know I can do what I set my mind to, but starting a company can be risky and I need to be able to take care of my family.

F: I learned my carpentry skills from a master carpenter when I was young and have learned to appreciate the importance of providing quality for a reasonable price. I build custom ordered tables, chairs, dressers, everything and people like what I make. Lots of people ask me to make them furniture 'on the side,' and I like doing that. It is interesting and I get to be more creative. Starting my own company would let me be really innovative, but I am not sure whether I have all the skills to be a business person.

W: So that is why I am here. I want to open my own business, but don't know if this is a good idea or not. I would like to find out whether I have what it takes to start a successful business.

INTRODUCTIONS - YOUR 60-SECOND SOUND BYTE — ACTIVITY SHEET

Many events begin with introductions. Introductions provide a good opportunity to make a positive first impression. How you introduce yourself is important; good introductions are like an advertisement about you. Memorable advertisements include a strong message presented in an attractive way.

This activity, using a model called SAFeWay (**S**tatement, **A**mplify, **F**ew Examples, and **W**rap up), can help you create your advertisement/introduction. Think of it as your own personal advertisement that shows all that you are and have to offer. You might also want to think of a catchy headline for your 'ad' (e.g. "From Carpenter to Entrepreneur: Mission is-it-possible?").

1. Think of a statement (S) that provides a good picture of who you are. Consider your purpose for participating in this learning program.

2. Explain what this statement shows about you (A). Briefly describe why your statement is important.

3. Provide a few examples (F) of when you have demonstrated the qualities or abilities you have identified.

4. Explain why this is an important component of who you are and what this means in relation to the goals that you have set out for participating in this event (W).

2.2 INITIAL GOALS

Working with learners to identify and set goals is an important first step in the reflection process. Identifying goals helps learners make informed decisions about their future and the best way to invest their time, money, and effort. The goals can relate to any area of the learners' lives and reflect their journey in a (w)holistic way (mind, body, heart, and spirit).

Learners may initially identify fairly broad goals, but they should be encouraged to set more specific goals as they gain greater insight into their own abilities. Furthermore, some people will come across exciting opportunities on their journey, and could revise their goals as they proceed.

The following excerpt from *Alice in Wonderland* shows the importance of setting clear goals. Alice comes to a fork in the road and does not know which way to proceed. She sees the Cheshire Cat and asks:

> `Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'
>
> `That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.
>
> `I don't much care where--' said Alice.
>
> `Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.
>
> `--so long as I get SOMEWHERE,' Alice added as an explanation.
>
> `Oh, you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, `if you only walk long enough.'
>
> (*Alice in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll, 1866)

Facilitator Notes

The following activity sheets include activities to help learners identify goals that align with their interests and passions. "Goal Planner" enables learners to jot down multiple goals, reflecting various aspects of their lives and breaks them down into small steps. "Setting a Path to your Goal" is a text-based activity, which provides guiding questions that prompt learners to explore their goals. "Goal Setting" is an activity which focuses the learner on defining one specific goal. Learners may choose to present their goals to other members of the group, their family, a co-worker, or community member.

Facilitators should be aware that any reflective process may result in an emotional response. For example, a learner may feel a profound sense of failure if they believe that they have never completed anything in their life. The facilitator must be prepared to refer learners to appropriate counseling and support services, such as elders, psychologists, healing circles or other available support services.

GOAL PLANNER **ACTIVITY SHEET**

Another strategy that can be helpful in setting goals is to write down goals in stages. This can helps you to see the steps that need to be taken as well as where these steps fit in a larger plan or big picture. As you journey toward your goals, you can change or revise your path at any time as you discover new things about yourself.

Write down what you think your goals are in various areas of your life. You can begin by writing the next steps and working toward the long-term goals or writing the long-term goals and working back to the next steps. Remember that some long-terms goals may seem impossible, but if they are broken down into smaller pieces, they seem to become manageable.

Goal(s)	Next steps	Short term 3-6 months	Medium Term ~ 2 years	Long term 3 - 5 years
Personal Growth				
Employment/ Work				
Education/ Training				
Relationships With others				
Other				

Other areas where you could consider creating goals include:

- your relationship with the natural environment
- your community involvement
- health and wellness
- spirituality
- hobbies

SETTING A PATH TO YOUR GOAL

ACTIVITY SHEET (1 OF 2)

Learning is like a journey and when planning a journey it helps to have an idea of where you want to go and what you want to achieve. You can change/adjust your goals or your path at any time; exciting opportunities could arise that you might not have anticipated before starting on your journey. In any case, moving towards your goal requires you to make choices and then take some steps - even tiny steps - in that direction. Remember "the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" (Lao-Tzu, 604 BC -531 BC).

The following activity can help you identify personal, career or educational goals. Your goals could relate to anything including creating employment opportunities, developing healthy relationships, improving your health and wellness, or learning something new. As you answer these questions, consider the possibilities. *Remember to dream.*

1. What would you like your life to look like in the future (for example, in 6 months, 2 years, 3-5 years)?

   What would you like to change about your current life?

   What would you keep the same?

   What will you be doing? With whom?

2. When you think about taking steps to reach your goal, do you sometimes feel nervous that you may not reach it? What causes you to feel nervous?

   What can you do to feel more confident that you will reach your goal?

SETTING A PATH TO YOUR GOAL **ACTIVITY SHEET** (2 OF 2)

3. What obstacles might you face when trying to reach your goal?

   What can you do to overcome these obstacles?

   Who can provide you with support to help you reach your goal?

4. What are the first steps you need to take on the path to your goal?

5. What step(s) will you take tomorrow?

6. When do you think you will reach your goal?

Remember, the journey does not end when you reach your goal. Along the way, take time to see where you are at and begin setting some new goals.

GOAL SETTING — ACTIVITY SHEET

Think about one goal that you have. It could be personal, educational, spiritual, employment or health-related. Make sure the goal is specific and is meaningful to you. Reaching your goal require that you make choices and take some steps in that direction. After writing your goals, remember you can revise them as you discover new opportunities along the way.

Answer the following questions to help you set a path to your goal. As you think about these questions, remember to dream and consider all possibilities. Feel free to use the example sentences below, or to create your own.

1. Choose your goal. What will you do? When will it be done?

   I will _____ (do what) by _____ (time).

2. Why is this goal important? What will improve when you reach this goal?

   When I reach this goal I will be more _____

   I will be able to _____

   I will also have _____

3. What challenges might you face on the journey to your goal?

   I am afraid that _____

   It will be difficult to _____

4. What can you do to minimize or overcome these challenges?

   It will be easier to reach my goal if I _____

   To reach my goal I will need to _____

   Who can help me reach my goal? _____

2.3 GIVING SHAPE TO LIFE EXPERIENCES

Facilitator Notes

This activity can be used with learners of all language and literacy levels to initiate reflection and conversation. Although this appears to be a simple activity, by completing this exercise learners can gain profound insight of their life as a series of events following certain patterns and trends.

To complete this activity learners draw shapes that represent (in broad, general terms) their past, present, and future. Learners may draw any images or geometric designs to symbolize their lives, including squares, circles, pyramids, trees, kites, clouds, or trains. The facilitator then encourages learners to reflect on how the various phases of their life relate to one another.

For example:

Example 1

Example 2

Because there are numerous possible interpretations for these examples, it is valuable to have the learners give meaning to their own drawing (depending on comfort levels, the learners might share with a partner, a small group, or the entire group). Some learner interpretations of these drawings are outlined below:

Example 1: The past and the present are disconnected, with the past larger than the present. This shows that their past had a significant effect on them, but they feel separated from their past. This could be due to emigration or changed lifestyle (e.g., survived childhood trauma, a serious injury/illness, etc.). They do, however, see a connection between the present and the future.

Example 2: The three layers of the pyramid represent growth and development from the past to the present and into the future. The present and future feel stable because they are building on a strong, broad foundation from the past. The narrowing at the top represents becoming more focused in life, resulting from more clearly defined personal priorities.

Once they have identified the meaning of the drawn shapes, learners can then practice describing the meaning of the "shape of their life experiences" orally or in writing.

Giving Shape to Life Experiences

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give learners about 2 minutes to think about their past, their present, and their future. Ask them to think about how their past relates to their present and how their past and present relate to their future. Invite learners to consider what shape might best represent their lives.

2. Give students about 10 minutes to draw the shapes (with three pieces) on a blank sheet of paper that represents their past, present, and future. These shapes could be any size and can be drawn anywhere on the page. Ask students to consider how these shapes reflect their life experience.

3. Invite learners to share "the shape of their life" drawing with the group (they can hold up their paper or draw their shapes on a flip chart or whiteboard). Learners then explain to the other members of the group why they drew these shapes and outline how they represent their past, present and future. (Facilitators may wish to model this activity for the learners, sharing their own shapes and the interpretation). The SAFeWay could be used to help guide the learners' presentations.

4. Point out to learners that even though their drawings might look similar, the specific meaning for each person will be different. This is because no two people have identical life experiences. Learners should document what the shapes mean, so that others may view them and understand how to interpret "the shape of their life experiences."

   Note: Facilitators are encouraged to emphasize the importance of learners defining, *in their own words*, the significance of the 'shape of their life' as well as any evidence (in writing or orally) they develop, especially if they consider including it in a portfolio.

5. Open a discussion with participants that explores how the shapes could represent how people continuously evolve and change. Although all individuals' lives are unique, each person is where they are as a result of his or her past; it is from here that they create our opportunities for the future. Encourage learners to explore how their previous experiences contribute to who they are now and how this will influence who they will become.

Alternate Activity: Life/Work Balance Wheel

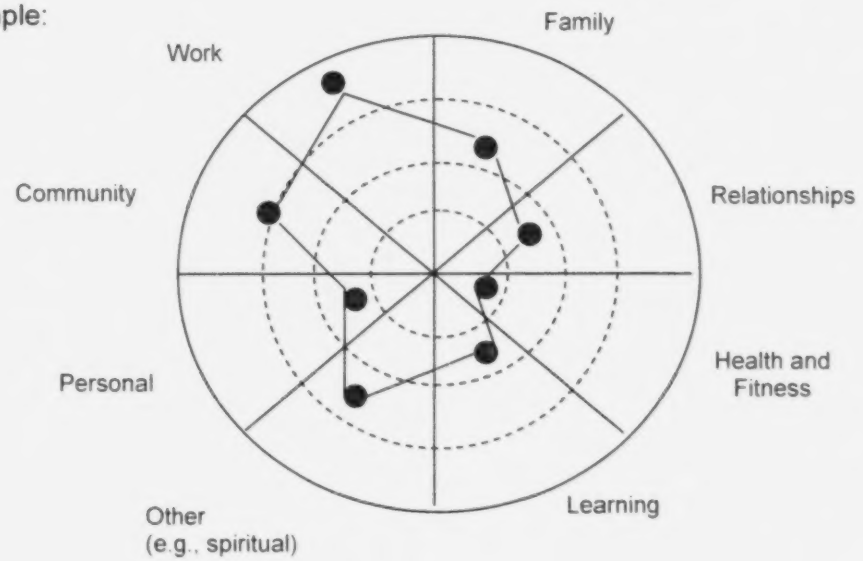
Facilitator Notes

The following life/work balance wheel is another activity that helps people reflect on their lives.

For this activity:

1. Learners plot how much time they spend on each of the areas. Marks toward the centre of the wheel represent little time spent. Marks in the outer ring represent a lot of time spent.
2. Learners identify which aspects of their lives are either balanced or out-of-balance.
3. Learners then reflect on their lives and identify goals for enhancing the overall balance in their lives.

For example:



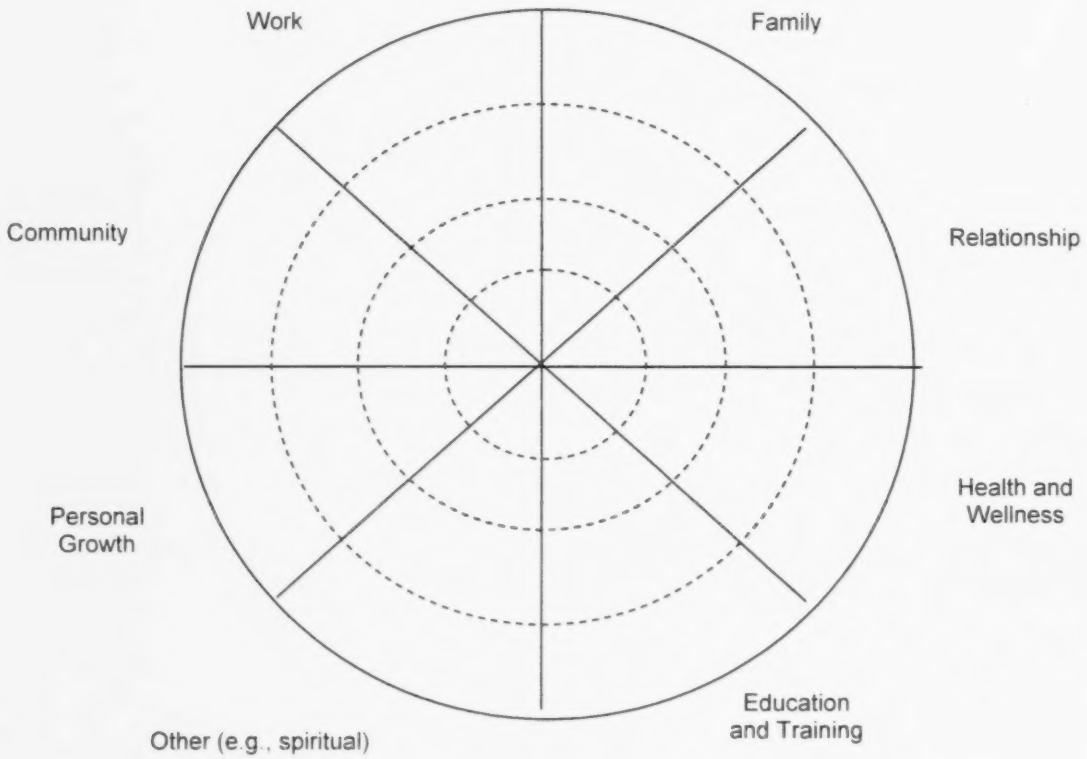
In this example, the learner sees that he/she spends very little time on health and fitness. To achieve better balance, the learner might identify health and fitness as a goal to focus on, and aim to walk for 30 minutes each day and/or to eat more fruits and vegetables. Learners could also select goals that address more than one goal at a time (e.g., eating healthy meals with the family).

To complement this activity, learners could be invited to use a different colour marker to plot the importance of each area on the wheel. They could compare the value that each element has for them with the time devoted to that aspect of their life. Learners can identify imbalances and begin to set priorities for change.

LIFE/WORK BALANCE WHEEL

ACTIVITY SHEET

Look at the Life/Work Balance Wheel and think about how much time you spend on these areas of your life (during the day, week, or month). Draw dots in the spaces on the wheel to represent the amount of time that you spend on each of these aspects of your life. Dots near the centre indicate that you spend little or no time on this area of your life and dots in the outer ring indicate that you spend a lot of time. Join the dots to see the life/work balance more clearly.



Considering your personal priorities, identify the areas that you would like to focus on. You can colour in these 'slices' of the pie or write them here:

1.
2.
3.

Steps I can take to create more balance in my life include:

1.
2.
3.

2.4 AN ANIMAL I ADMIRE

Facilitator Notes

This activity invites learners to identify the qualities that they possess by thinking about an animal that they admire. This activity can be helpful to learners because they may find it easier to identify admirable qualities in animals rather than in themselves. Facilitators should encourage learners to consider any member of the animal kingdom, including insects, birds, reptiles, etc.

1. Have the learners identify an animal they admire.

2. Learners could draw or cut and paste a picture of this animal in the middle of a blank page.

3. Ask learners to describe the qualities of the animal, focusing on the positive. Ask the learners to write at least 10 words or statements about this animal on the page. (Learners could be encouraged to share the information on the animal they admire with a partner or in small groups).

4. Ask learners to transform the statements about the admired animal into sentences about themselves. Write sentences starting with "I am ..."

It is a powerful exercise for students to realize that the qualities they admire in an animal are qualities that they too possess or aspire to possess. Encourage learners to consider why these qualities are important to them.

For example: I admire Lions.

Lions are:

- Powerful
- Loyal
- Smart
- Hunter
- Independent
- Graceful
- Playful
- Mighty
- Soft
- Strong

1) **I am** powerful, loyal, smart, playful, and soft.
2) **I am becoming** independent, graceful, mighty and strong.
3) **I am working on being** more independent by seeing how I survive the difficult times in my life. I try to rely on myself, but not be afraid to seek help when necessary.

Possible Adaptations to the "Animal I Admire" Activity

1. Encourage learners to share the results of their reflection with others. Learners could use the SAFeWay to prepare for their presentation.

2. Encourage learners to reflect upon times in their life when they have demonstrated these qualities. Have them reflect upon why they admire these qualities and how possessing these qualities will assist them in reaching their goal(s).

   "In **the past I have shown that I am** loyal by keeping my promises and only making promises I think I can keep. For example..."

   Invite learners to collect any materials or samples that demonstrate the qualities they showed at these times.

3. Help learners explore how the qualities they have identified relate to their life/work goals. Learners could create a table in which they compare and contrast the KSAs with the necessary elements for achieving their goals. The evidence created could be used to support learners in creating a portfolio and reaching for their goals.

4. Encourage learners to explore the symbolism of these animals through myths, legends and/or animal totems from different cultures (e.g., First Nations, Chinese, East Indian, Celtic, etc.). They could explore how these symbols relate to their own lives and their cultural background. Learners could then create evidence which portrays the link between themselves and the symbolism of the animal(s).

5. Learners could discuss a meaningful interaction that they have had with an animal or with the natural world. What qualities of the natural world were revealed to them? What personal qualities were displayed through this interaction with nature?

6. If appropriate, learners could compare their personal values with the values of other people, companies, or organizations. For example, if looking for a job, learners may want to research the values of a company where they might apply for a job. This process could help learners identify corporate values and outline some initial consideration of the type of company they would prefer to work for.

AN ANIMAL I ADMIRE — ACTIVITY SHEET

1. Think about the animal that you admire most. It could be anything from a wet, wiggly worm to a warm fuzzy bear (e.g., bird, insect, marsupial, mammal, reptile, etc.).

2. Write the name, draw a picture or paste a photograph of an animal you admire on a blank sheet of paper.

3. On the paper write as many words or phrases as you can (at least ten) to describe the qualities of the animal that you admire.

   For example: A lion is powerful, graceful, loyal, playful, independent ...

4. Write the following sentences on the paper, leaving enough space to complete the sentences with the words you used to describe the animal in the previous question.

   - I am _____
   - I am becoming _____
   - I am working on being _____

   For example:
   - **I am** graceful, loyal ...
   - **I am becoming** playful....
   - **I am trying to become** more independent by seeing how I survive the difficult times in my life. I try to rely on myself, but not be afraid to seek help when necessary.

Animals I Admire Activity - Part 2

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

When learners have completed reflecting on the animals that they admire, they could be encouraged to delve deeper into reflecting on how they have demonstrated these qualities in the past. The following questions could help learners to dig deeper into the transferability of their KSAs.

1. Invite learners to think about how they have demonstrated these qualities in the past and how they would like to further develop in these areas. Encourage learners to identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes and how they demonstrated them.

   For example:

   "In the past I have shown that I am _____ when I _____"

2. Identify a plan or strategy to further develop the qualities you have identified under "I am becoming." This will help you to identify ways to increase the knowledge, skills or attitudes that are important to you.

   Following are some suggested questions you could use as prompts for the learners:

   a. Select an area that you would like to develop.

   b. In the next three months, what will you do to develop this area?

   c. In the next six months, what will you do to further develop this area?

   d. In the next year, what will you be able to do to show that you have developed this area?

2.5 SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE: HOW RELATIONSHIPS INFLUENCED ME

Facilitator Notes

This activity encourages learners to reflect on what they have learned through relationships with other people in their lives. Learners interact with many people who play an influential role in their lives. These people could challenge, criticize, motivate, inspire, understand and accept, or judge them. Learners might have a long-term relationship with these significant people or have only a brief encounter with them; the learning that results from the experience is more important than the duration of the interaction.

Facilitators are reminded that these significant people may reflect positive experiences with a loved one, co-worker, or mentor; or they could reflect negative experiences with a relative, colleague, or friend. The facilitator needs to be ready to refer learners to appropriate counselling services or other supports, such as elders, healing circles, support groups, psychologists, etc.

Through this activity, learners may develop a deeper understanding of themselves and their abilities. By reflecting upon difficult or unhappy interactions with another person, learners might even be able to see these interactions with new eyes. Learners may be able to look beyond the challenges of the relationships as their KSAs (such as perseverance, courage, strength, ability to negotiate, etc.) are identified. Strong facilitation skills can support learners through a deep and rewarding reflection process.

Options for completing the activity

This activity might be completed orally, in writing, through visual images, in a role play, etc. For example, some learners may prefer to draw pictures or paste photos of the significant person and some memorable events relating to that person. They might write a story or play, tell a story, make an audio recording, paint a picture, or use other media to present their reflections. Facilitators may wish to allow learners to select their preferred media for completing this activity.

Significant People: How Relationships Influenced Me — **FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Give learners a few minutes to think about someone who influenced them.

2. a) Have learners write the name of a significant person in the middle of a blank page or cut and paste a picture of this person.

   b) Have learners write key words that come to mind about the significant person/people.

   c) Learners continue to write words for a specific period of time or until they run out of ideas.

3. Learners select one group of associated words. Learners think about how these words relate to one another. (If desired, the learners could describe the relationship orally with a partner, in small groups or the large group.)

4. Learners draft a paragraph, prepare a story or use other media to present key aspects or events relating to the relationship with this significant person.

5. Learners work with the facilitator to expand the description of the learning arising from the relationship or interaction. Learners could add further details about the qualities or values of this person and their relationship with this person. Learners could describe the transformation that occurred in their life as a result of the interaction with this person. Encourage learners to identify strengths that they developed as a result of this interaction.

6. From this visual image, paragraph and/or oral presentation, learners may be able to identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes they have demonstrated throughout as a result of the interaction with this person. Learners could identify commonalties or differences in values or principles, life experience, or priorities. Elements of character, including empathy, initiative, perseverance, integrity, courage, optimism, respect, honesty, fairness and responsibility could be explored and described.

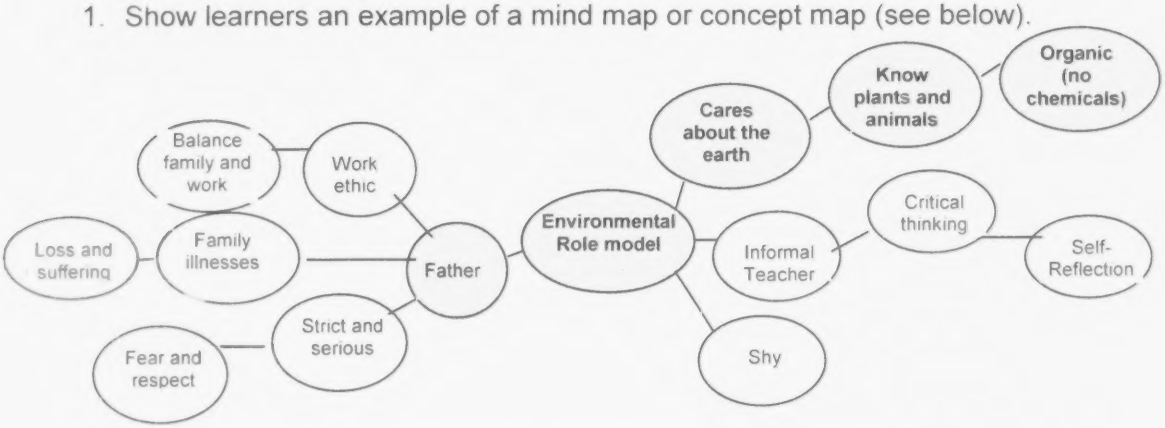
7. Learners could collect what they develop to use as an element of their personal portfolio. They could also present their evidence in small or large groups, as well as to family, friends, or trusted community members.

Option 2: MIND MAP OR CONCEPT MAP OF KEY PERSON

Facilitator Notes

Some learners may prefer to use a mind map or concept map to capture the main points of the relationship with the key person.

1. Show learners an example of a mind map or concept map (see below).



2. Invite learners to write the name of a significant person in a circle in the center of a blank page.

3. Learners then begin to write (in circles around the middle circle) whatever words or ideas come to mind in relation to this significant person. Learners continue to write until they run out of room or ideas.

4. Learners draft a paragraph or prepare a story that presents key aspects or events relating to the relationship with this key person. Learners could be invited to present their story.

5. Learners work with the facilitator, a classmate, family member, or community member to expand the description of the key person in their life. Learners could add further details about the qualities or values of this person and the influence of their relationship with this person.

6. From this visual image, paragraph and/or oral presentation, learners may be able to identify the knowledge and skills they have demonstrated throughout their relationship with this person. Learners could identify commonalties or differences in values or principles, life experience, or priorities. Learners could also identify what they have learned through their experience with this person.

7. Learners could collect what they develop as an element of their personal portfolio. Learners could be invited to present their evidence.

2.6 LIFELINE: IDENTIFYING SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS IN YOUR LIFE

Facilitator Notes

Drawing a lifeline is an activity designed to encourage learners to reflect on trends and patterns in their lives. By reflecting on their life experiences, learners can see how events have unfolded to bring them to where they are. The lifeline identifies significant moments in learners' lives, where substantial experiential learning has likely occurred. (A facilitator could use this activity to help learners identify events to explore in activity 2.7).

1. Have learners draw a timeline on a blank page. The timeline could represent any time period relevant to the learner (several months, a year, several years or a lifetime).

2. Ask learners to plot the significant events in their life on the timeline. These significant moments could relate to the learners' life in general or an aspect of their life (e.g., personal, work, education and training, etc.). If they wish, learners can join the dots (as shown below).

3. Invite learners to reflect on the significant moments they have plotted.

4. Ask learners to extract the knowledge, skills and attitudes they demonstrated in those experiences.

A range of emotions may be expressed as learners remember key moments in their lives. Facilitators need to be prepared to refer learners to appropriate counselling or support services in the area, including psychologists, elders, healing circles, or support groups.

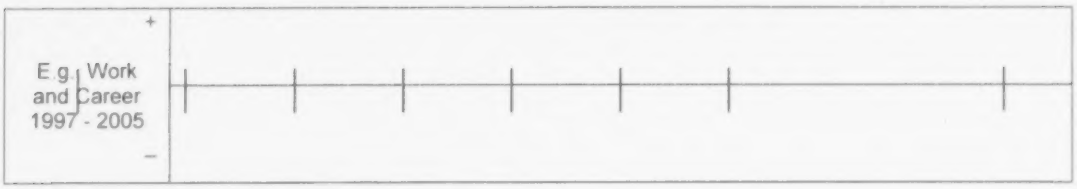
Additional Options for Activity

1. Learners could draw additional lifelines representing other aspects of their lives, or other time periods. With multiple lifelines, learners might compare the various lifelines and see patterns that emerge.

2. Learners could draw a lifeline representing what they would like their future to be like. They could then identify what areas of their past lifeline could form a foundation for this preferred future.

LIFELINE — ACTIVITY SHEET

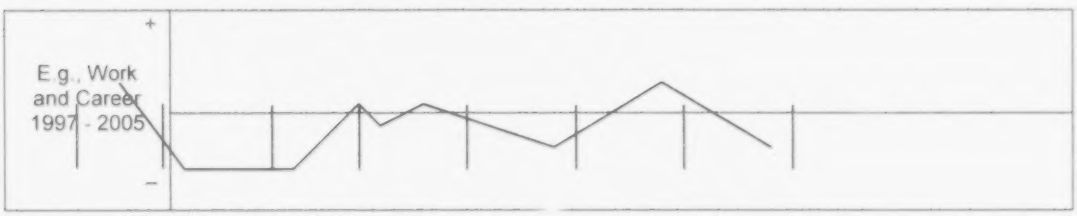
1. Draw a line down the middle of a blank page and indicate the time periods on the line. Select what aspect(s) of your life this timeline will represent.



Think about (reflect upon) the experiences you have had during this time.

2. Draw dots at the significant moments in your life and label the events. Draw a line graph to plot these events for the time periods chosen.

For example



3. Answer the following questions as you look at your lifeline:
   a) What made your experience(s) significant?

   b) What challenges did you encounter?

   c) What did you do when you faced challenges?

   d) What did you learn through these significant experiences?

   e) What trends or patterns do you see in your life?
   What can you learn from these trends or patterns?

LIFELINE: Activity Sheet (continued)

4. Select one event that you have placed on your lifeline. You are now *invited* to share this event with a partner, a small group, or the whole group.

   In your discussion, you may want to:
   a. Identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs) that you developed as a result of this experience;

   b. Explain how this experience helped you develop these KSAs; and

   c. Outline how you may behave differently now (e.g., at school, work, or home) as a result of what you learned in these experiences.

5. You may want to create additional evidence from this activity. To do this, you may want to create:
   a) A graphic image (e.g., a painting, cartoon, or photograph story);
   b) A written story (e.g., autobiography, narrative, or short story);
   c) An presentation (e.g., on audio-tape or video-tape); and/or
   d) A performance (e.g. play, song, or dance).

Please Note:

As you think about your life, you may feel memories resurface. If you are having a strong emotional response to this activity, talk to your facilitator or someone that you trust. They can help you to get the support you require (through support groups, healing circles, elders, counsellors, etc.).

(W)Holistic Lifeline Activity

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Learners draw four lines on a blank page. Label each line with one of the four aspects of themselves (mind, body, heart/emotion and spirit). Place the names of the months at the top of the page (above the lines). Learners may chart their experiences for the past year by marking the pattern in these four aspects of their life for the past year.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Body One Year	+											
	-											
Mind One Year	+											
	-											
Heart One Year	+											
	-											
Spirit One Year	+											
	-											

This (w)holistic lifeline can provide learners with a glimpse at the patterns and trends in their lives, as well as the degree of balance among the various aspects of their life. After reflecting on the lines they have drawn in body, mind, heart and spirit, invite learners to identify areas they would like to work on to increase the balance of their whole self.

Invite learners to discuss how balance among the four aspects of themselves could enhance their lives. Discussion could also include how balance will better prepare them to face the challenges in their life, reduce the effects of stress, and increase their overall sense of well-being.

(W)HOLISTIC LIFELINE ACTIVITY — ACTIVITY SHEET

1. Think about (reflect upon) your experiences over the past year.
2. Draw dots in the spaces to represent the quality of this aspect of your life during the last year. Draw a line to connect the dots.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Body One Year	+											
	-											
Mind One Year	+											
	-											
Heart One Year	+											
	-											
Spirit One Year	+											
	-											

3. Look at the graphs and identify any patterns that emerge from these graphs. For example, does any area appear to be guiding the others (when it goes up or down, the other areas follow)? Is one area more positive or negative than the others?

4. Consider what you might want to do to improve your pattern/balance for the next year.

5. What can you learn from this graph to help prepare you for the future?

2.7 LIFE'S MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Facilitator Notes

Memorable moments can happen at any time in a person's life. These moments occur often when people least expect them and yet can alter a person's life forever. When these moments occur, people often feel that their whole perspective on life has changed; they have a new perspective on themselves and others, as well as things that happen. These memorable moments may be happy or difficult, but are certainly valuable as is revealed through a process of reflection.

For this activity, the facilitator's role is to ensure learners reflect on the learning resulting from experiences, rather than focusing on the experience itself. Facilitators should also encourage participants to avoid dwelling too much on the excitement of a positive experience or on the sense of failure from a negative experience. Facilitators can also support learners by modelling constructive thought patterns that lead towards increased insight and self-awareness.

To foster deep and meaningful reflection, facilitators are encouraged to prompt learners to identify how their perceptions changed as a result of these moments, and if/how they now behave differently. Learners might also be asked to identify why they think this event impacted them. Because these experiences may involve happy or difficult memories, it is critical that facilitators guide the productive exploration of significant life experiences in a safe and supportive environment.

The previous activity (Lifeline: Identifying significant moments in your life) may be helpful to learners to determine some of their memorable moments. Facilitators are encouraged to consider using the lifeline activity to lead up to this activity and to introduce the idea of significant moments.

Memorable Moments

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

The reflective questions in this activity help learners to reflect on experiences they have had at work, school, home, or in the community. By applying this reflection process to memorable moments, learners will be able to identify KSAs that they may not have recognized in themselves before. Remember that it is sometimes necessary to dig and dig deeper to get at the KSAs (as discussed in Section 1.7 Your Daily Activities: a goldmine of KSAs).

Encourage learners to consider a wide range of life experiences to reflect upon. You could provide students with suggestions of events that could result in defining moments, including:

- School (e.g., course-work, non-completion, graduating, returning after a period of time)
- Family (e.g., moving, having a child, divorce or separation, marriage, or loss of a loved one)
- Travel (e.g., planning a trip or vacation, language learning, or interacting with other cultures)
- Work (e.g., a promotion, first job, losing a job, receiving a letter of appreciation, or a volunteer experience)
- Health and wellbeing (e.g., a car accident, a serious illness, or involvement in sporting activities)
- Random events (e.g., an inspiring conversation with a stranger, an enlightening movie, a powerful song, or a meaningful book)

Presentation or documentation of the evidence of learning that results from defining mornents could be made using various formats. The format should best reflect the KSAs emerging from the experience, including:

- Mind maps
- Written paragraphs or stories
- Artwork or diagrams
- Oral presentations
- Videotapes
- Songs
- Poems
- Drama or play
- Comparisons of self before and after (chart or diagram)

After they have completed their evidence, learners could be invited to present their memorable moment(s) to others to the group. They may also be encouraged to consider presenting their memorable moment to family, friends, or trusted community members, as a testament to what they have learned through their life experience.

If using the lifeline activity, have learners select one moment from their lifeline to reflect upon.

MEMORABLE MOMENTS

ACTIVITY SHEET (1 OF 2)

Select a significant event in your life. Consider the following questions as you reflect on this experience.

1. Describe the significant experience, by outlining:
   a) What happened?

   b) Why did it happen?

   c) Where and when did it happen?

   d) Who was involved?

   e) What was my role in the event and what did I do?

   f) What was the result?

   g) What would I do differently next time?

2. What makes this experience significant? Was it positive and/or negative?

3. What barriers or challenges did I face during this experience?

MEMORABLE MOMENTS **ACTIVITY SHEET** (2 OF 2)

4. How did I overcome any barriers or challenges that I encountered?

5. What was I able to accomplish or learn as part of my involvement?

6. Which of my skills/knowledge/attitudes are shown by my involvement in this experience?

7. What other personal strengths are shown in this experience?

8. From my involvement in this experience, what knowledge, skills or attitudes do I need to improve or learn more about?

9. From the knowledge, skills and attitudes that I demonstrated in this experience, which ones relate to my goals? (How could they help me reach my goals?)

10. How can I best document these knowledge, skills and attitudes? What evidence do I have or can I make to show what I have learned?

2.8 YOUR LIFE STORY: A NARRATIVE OR AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Facilitator Notes

Writing a narrative or autobiography is a valuable activity for learners as it provides the opportunity to tell their life story in their own voice. As learners reflect on their lives they can select which experiences to highlight in their life story. A benefit of writing a narrative or autobiography is that it enhances learners' ability to see their lives as a ***learning journey,*** as opposed to a string of isolated experiences.

Facilitators may choose to discuss the final format of the narrative or autobiography with the learners. While some learners may prefer to write their life story, others may prefer to use other methods of storytelling. Learners may prefer to write their story on paper or on the computer, draw their story, tell their story, paint their story, sing their story, dance their story, act their story, etc. While considering the required outcomes of your learning event, explore possible options for presenting the stories of the learners' lives.

The format of the narrative may also be determined by the learners' purpose or goal. There are numerous purposes for writing a personal/professional narrative, including:

- As a legacy to their ancestors or future generations;
- As a document to demonstrate their critical thinking and formal writing skills, that could be used for admission to further education;
- As a testimonial to themselves of the achievements that have been made, in spite of the challenges encountered; and/or
- To identify trends and patterns in their lives upon which to build a future.

Helen Barrett, a leader in the area of electronic portfolios, states that storytelling strongly supports reflective learning and enables learners to think about what they have learned, why it is important and what it might mean for their future (refer to Helen Barrett's article: "Electronic Portfolios as Digital Stories of Deep Learning," 2004). In addition, the learner's life story becomes a visible, tangible testament to their accomplishments.

Another important quality of writing a reflective life story is that it can be a healing (therapeutic) process for learners. This process offers learners the opportunity to reflect on the events on their lives and see them from a different perspective. Once they have documented their life, in whatever format they choose, learners are sometimes able to 'let go' of old memories.

YOUR LIFE STORY — ACTIVITY SHEET

As you reflect on your life, you will likely see the threads of your life story. If you think about the activities you have completed, the evidence you have gathered, and the significant experiences in your life, a broad picture of your life begins to emerge. Take a moment to think about your story.

Think about what the story of your life might look like. Consider how you may want to present your life story. You could write the story, draw the story, tell the story, paint the story, sing the story, dance the story, etc. Discuss this with the facilitator to ensure that you are meeting the requirements of the program, course, or workshop[2].

If you are writing your story consider:

1. What will the title be?

2. What are the main messages for your story? What are the key elements to support these messages?

3. How do you want to present the information? For example: as a story, novel, report, poem, newscast, retrospective, artistic installation, performance, etc.

4. How will you order the story? For example: in order from earliest to most recent events, by theme, by relationship, or by job?

If you are dancing, drawing, painting, or singing your life story, you may want to consider:

1. What media will work best?

2. What colours, words, sounds, images, tastes, smells, feelings, and/or movements best symbolize your life?

3. Where will you show it?

Now, on to the story of *your life*.

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[2] Learners could visit http://www.storycenter.org/cookbook.pdf for more information on writing a life story.

2.9 CREATING EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

Facilitator Notes

This activity helps people to develop evidence of the knowledge and skills that they develop at home, at school, at work, in volunteer activities or in the community. By reflecting on the learning represented by these materials (which they may have created in the past), learners can develop increased awareness of their knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs). Materials that could be used as evidence of learning include:

At home: driver's license, photographs, divorce certificate, tax return, household budget, journal or diary, web logs, chores, projects, etc.

At school: papers, reports, assessments (rubrics, exams, checklists, peer assessments, self-assessments, etc.), transcripts, presentations, course outlines, awards, certificates, diplomas, degrees, etc.

At work: work samples, performance evaluations, self-assessments, demonstrations, rejection letters, interviews, etc.

Volunteer activities: letters of appreciation, thank-you cards, service awards, gifts received, posters, brochures, certificates, etc.

In the community: pamphlets from health clinics, community newsletters,

Through guided questions (see Activity Sheet on following page), learners can uncover the KSAs that are represented by the evidence and can begin to relate their learning to experiences. Open-ended questions work well to guide the learner through this exploration of their KSAs and to help them identify the meaning of their evidence. It is imperative that the learner reflect on the meaning of the evidence and identify their KSAs, as the evidence alone does not necessarily demonstrate learning.

Feel free to adapt this activity to meet the needs of the group.

Options for delivering this activity

The KSAs identified through this activity may be incorporated into an achievement or skills-based résumé. Similarly, the evidence created could be attached to a résumé to showcase or highlight the particular skills related to desired jobs. There are many options for enhancing résumés or supporting career exploration through this activity.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING – ITEMS OF MERIT **ACTIVITY SHEET**

There are items in your daily life that hold special meaning for you. You have likely received, created or acquired various pieces of evidence that demonstrate your learning. Through a process of reflection, you can identify the meaning to create your evidence. These items can then become components of your portfolio, if they clearly show your knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs).

As you look at the item that has special meaning for you, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Where or how did I get/create this item?

2. What meaning does this item have for me?

3. What does this item say about me?

4. What was my involvement in the related event, activity, or project?

5. What barriers or challenges did I face during this event, activity, or project?

6. How did I overcome these barriers or challenges?

7. What did I accomplish as part of my involvement in this event, activity, or project?

8. What did I learn from being involved in this event, activity, or project?

9. Which of my KSAs does this item show or represent?

10. Which of my strengths does this item show?

11. When I think about the related event, activity, or project, are there any KSAs that I could improve for next time?

12. Think about your goals. How do the KSAs represented by this item help show that you meet the requirements of these goals?

13. Is this item the best evidence I can use to demonstrate my KSAs?
Do I need to include other evidence together with this one?
Would another piece of evidence better demonstrate my KSAs? What is this other piece of evidence?

14. Why might I include this as evidence in my portfolio?

2.10 ENHANCING YOUR RÉSUMÉ

Facilitator Notes

Many learners undertake reflection and portfolio development as a part of their job search or career development process. Reflection provides many benefits to these processes, due to the increased self-awareness developed by learners. Learners develop the ability to identify and demonstrate their transferable knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs). Learners also gain increased self-knowledge and by reflecting on their evidence are better prepared to write or talk about their KSAs.

As we know, learning can occur in any area of our life, including work, family, school, travel, and/or community involvement. By reflecting on all areas of their lives, learners can identify numerous activities they have been involved in and initiate a process of digging for the KSAs. This process can be particularly beneficial for learners with limited employment experience or minimal formal education/training.

Using the process outlined in Section 1.7 and 1.8, learners could begin to dig and dig deeper for their KSAs. Once learners have a strong sense of their learning, facilitators could encourage learners to write the KSAs as achievements to enhance their basic résumé. By including their KSAs as achievements on their résumé, potential employers will obtain a more accurate picture of the overall abilities of the candidate (refer to Section 1.8 "Digging Deeper for KSAs" for an example).

Learners may also consider attaching a copy of evidence relating to this activity to their résumé and cover letter, or bring this evidence with them to an interview to help demonstrate their learning.

Enhanced Résumé

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

1. Start with the learners' basic résumés. Select one job identified on the résumé.

2. Outline the activities related to that job. Provide learners with enough time to identify as many activities as possible. The list can be quite extensive.

3. Select one of these duties or responsibilities identified in step 3. Through the use of probing questions, begin to identify the KSAs reflected in this activity.

4. The KSAs can be further defined by identifying the accomplishments achieved by the learner. Accomplishments may refer to the volume, quality, or importance of work completed. Questions may relate to the contribution of their activities to the family, community or organization.

5. Learners review their résumé and make any necessary revisions to better reflect the KSAs they possess as achievements. Learners may wish to add detail to the KSAs that describe the level of mastery as well (e.g., complete the task independently, inter-dependently, or dependently). Learners could also select key achievements to highlight in their cover letter as well.

6. Invite learners to consider what evidence they may be able to create or collect that reflects the KSAs identified on their resume.

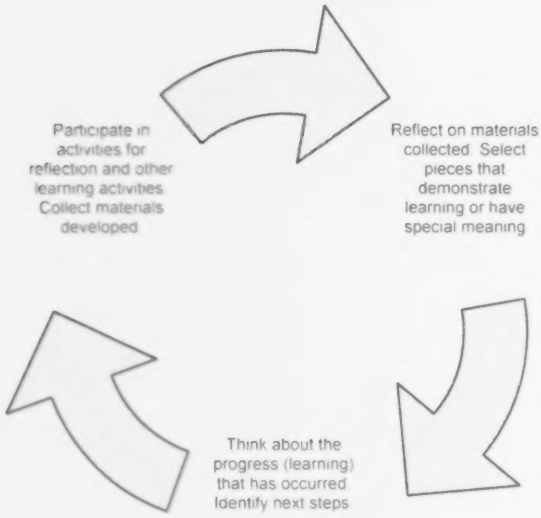
7. Discuss with learners whether they might submit copies of this evidence with the résumés they submit for a job or whether they may want to bring some samples of evidence to an interview. Questions may include:
    1. How will you select the pieces of evidence that best demonstrate your skills?
    2. What advantages are there to submitting evidence with your cover letter and résumé?
    3. What advantages are there to bringing your evidence with you to an interview?
    4. How many pieces of evidence will you attach or bring with you, if any?

8. Learners could also discuss how the process of reflection has helped them write their résumé and cover letter, as well as prepare for their interview. Invite learners to identify how reflection has helped them in the job search process, even if they do not show their evidence to an employer. (examples include: "to know myself better" or "am able to see how my experience prepares me for this job," etc.)

2.11 REFLECTING ON PROGRESS

Facilitator Notes

As learners complete activities for reflection, they should be encouraged to collect the evidence created, select some key pieces of evidence, and reflect on the progress this evidence shows. This is an important step in a portfolio development process. By collecting, selecting and reflecting, learners see *for themselves* what they have learned and accomplished.


Participate in activities for reflection and other learning activities. Collect materials developed
Reflect on materials collected. Select pieces that demonstrate learning or have special meaning
Think about the progress (learning) that has occurred. Identify next steps

Selecting the evidence that best demonstrate learning and progress is an important step in this process. The selected evidence could be organized based upon pre-determined criteria (for example, it could be developed at the goal-setting stage of the process in negotiation with the facilitator). If learners are working to develop their KSAs for a specific purpose, they could compare the KSAs shown in their evidence with the required KSAs of an education/training program or a job description. This can help focus their selection and organization of evidence.

Ideally, this would be an ongoing process that involves undertaking a variety of learning activities and then reflecting on the progress made, followed by additional activities and further reflection. At various steps along the way, it is important to celebrate that which has been achieved.

REFLECTING ON YOUR PROGRESS — ACTIVITY SHEET

Now that you have completed various activities, it can be helpful to take a second look at them and celebrate your achievements. When you look at all of the work you have done, you can begin to see concrete examples of your progress.

Read each question below and think about each one for a few minutes before you answer them. Once you finish this process, you can see the progress you have made and start planning the next steps to reaching your goal.

1. What progress can you see when you reflect on the activities you have completed?

2. Which activity did you enjoy the most? Why?

3. Which activity did you enjoy the least? Why?

4. Which piece of evidence that you created in these activities do you feel most proud of? Why?

5. What challenges did you experience while doing these activities?
   How did you try to solve them?
   Were they resolved?
   Would you do something differently next time?

6. Select some of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) demonstrated in the evidence you created. Describe why you selected these KSAs and what makes them significant to you.

   •

   •

   •

7. Think about the goals that you would like to achieve. Will the KSAs you have developed support you as you reach for your goals? Why or why not?

8. When you look at the evidence collected, what do you think are the KSAs that you need to improve? For each area, identify some next steps you could take to develop these KSAs.

   •

   •

   •

Remember to celebrate all that you have achieved and all that is yet to come!

3 IDEAS AND RESOURCES

There are many recent advances in the field of portfolio development, in particular through the use of technology. Traditional paper-based portfolios are becoming increasingly common, as are electronic portfolios. The format of the portfolio will vary depending on the group of learners and the desired outcomes.

Portfolios can be developed for numerous purposes, including:

- Art and Design Portfolio
- Digital Storytelling
- Employment Portfolio
- Evidence File
- Learning Portfolio
- Pass-portfolio
- Personal Career Portfolio
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Portfolio
- Professional Development Portfolio
- Selected Works Portfolio
- Showcase Portfolio
- Teaching Portfolio

Electronic portfolios are becoming increasingly popular and provide additional benefits to the traditional portfolios, including:

- Broader access to the information by posting online
- Facilitated updates to information
- Posting of the career portfolio, including résumé online
- Ability to connect with other technology, including online diaries, etc.

The following pages outline some online resources as well as print materials. Also included are links to sites where you can view sample portfolios. By looking at sample portfolios you can gain greater insight to the flexibility and immense potential of portfolio development.

Sample Online E-portfolios

Helen Barrett's Web Site on E-Portfolios provides links to many sample portfolios available online for:

1. Family involvement in early childhood portfolios
http://electronicportfolios.org/families/index.html
2. High School Portfolios
http://electronicportfolios.org/hs/index.html
3. Teacher Education and Professional Development Portfolios
http://electronicportfolios.org/teachers/index.html
4. "Electronic Portfolios as Digital Stories of Deep Learning" (2004)
http://electronicportfolios.org/digistory/epstory.html

Sample Teaching Portfolios: This page provides links (without comment) to a variety of teaching portfolios online
http://www.utep.edu/cetal/portfoli/samples.htm

3.1 RESOURCES (BOOKS AND DOCUMENTS)

Beckley, Dr. William L. (1997). *Creating a Classroom Portfolio System: A guide to assist teachers in kindergarten through eighth grade.* Kendall / Hunt; Iowa. ISBN: 0-7872-3483-4
This book provides an introduction to the benefits and challenges of implementing portfolio processes; helpful suggestions and useful strategies are also included. Also included are worksheets for recording portfolio progress, activities for reflection, and assessment tools.

Kerr, Rob. (1999) *Self-Discipline: Using portfolios to help students develop self-awareness, manage emotions and build relationships.* Pembroke; Ontario. ISBN: 1-55138-104-4.
This book contains practical exercises that focus on the development of intelligent self-control in youth. The 36 living skills activities encourage learners to explore and learn different strategies for developing self-awareness, managing emotions and building relationships.

Kimball, Miles A. (2003) *The Web Portfolio Guide: Creating Electronic Portfolios for the Web.* Addison Wesley Longman, Inc. ISBN: 0-321-09345-3
This book contains good theory and practical applications; it is well organized.

Moon, Jennifer. (2001) *Reflections in Learning and Professional Development: Theory and Practice.* Taylor & Francis Group. ISBN: 074943452X.
This book provides an overview of reflection as a strategy for learning and development. This work includes a discussion of literature about reflection, different reflection techniques, a new model of learning, and reflective activities.

Shaklee, Beverly D et.al. (1997) *Designing and Using Portfolios.* Allyn and Bacon; Massachusetts. ISBN: 0-205-16259-2.
This book outlines the process of portfolio assessment as authentic assessment. Also included are strategies for designing portfolios, collecting data, making decisions about curriculum and instruction, and reporting progress.

3.2 ONLINE MATERIALS AND INFORMATION

Dr Helen Barrett, Information on Electronic Portfolios

The website of internationally known expert on electronic portfolios, which includes links to conference presentations, published papers, links to sample portfolios and many other useful resources.

http://electronicportfolios.org/

Portfolio Development Workbook (Culturally modified from an Aboriginal perspective), Centre for Education and Work.

This workbook contains activities, forms, and checklists that can be used in a portfolio development workshop. Topics include: Taking Inventory, Setting Goals, Documentation, and Portfolio Development

www.cewca.org/materials_resources/documents/Portfolio_Development.pdf

Community Technology Centers: Individual Capacities Inventory

This Inventory provides a basic inventory checklist that people can use to identify general capacities, abilities and gifts that may have been learned in the home, with one's family, at work, for volunteer work, or in the community. (The final section of the document applies to the Community Technology Centers, but the initial checklists may be useful for people to explore their experiential learning).

http://www.tcfn.org/mapping/ici.htm

Jane MacDonald (2002). Documenting Student Success: The Development of a Learner Portfolio. Nova Scotia Department of Education

This resource is intended to enhance the assessment process in literacy / adult basic education programs in the province of Nova Scotia. The portfolio process is intended to give literacy practitioners a meaningful way to showcase student success. It was designed to document student success and to be used in conjunction with the *Nova Scotia Adult Learning Program* (ALP) and the *Intake Assessment Tools* presently used in adult education classes throughout Nova Scotia.

http://www.nald.ca/cbln/projects/dsuccess/dsuccess.pdf

Gwenna Moss Teaching and Learning Centre, University of Saskatchewan

This site provides an introduction to the creation of a teaching portfolio as a process and product. It outlines the parts of a portfolio, how to complete your portfolio, and links with other resources.

http://www.usask.ca/tlc/teaching_portfolios/

Essential Skills Website

The Essential Skills Website outlines the nine essential skills are the skills needed for work, learning and life. They provide the foundation for learning all other skills and enable people to evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace change.

http://www15.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/english/general/es.asp

The Blueprint for Life/Work Design, National Life/Work Centre

The Blueprint for Life/Work Design presents the life/work competencies that people need to map out their career development from childhood to adulthood.

http://www.blueprint4life.ca